

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Alcohol and Pregnancy Do Not Mix

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TRANSCRIPT:

Studies by CDC and others estimate that anywhere between 800 and 8000 babies are born with full fetal alcohol syndrome each year in the U.S.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders can happen to anyone. They're caused by alcohol use during pregnancy, period.

Some of the behavioral and learning disabilities in children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders can be lower IQ, problems with memory and attention, problems with hyperactivity, poor reasoning and judgment skills. Overall a lot of problems in school especially with math and social skills. Individuals with FASDs can also have problems with vision and hearing and problems with their organs, including the heart and kidneys.

A lot of these problems are really difficult to detect at birth and often do not show up until the children are in school.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders can occur among anyone, not just women who are addicted to alcohol or who have alcohol dependence.

Risky alcohol use for healthy women is defined as more than seven drinks per week or more than three drinks per occasion or any alcohol use for someone who's pregnant or could become pregnant.

For the woman who is truly addicted to alcohol, it's really important for her to bring that issue up with her provider and not feel ashamed to talk about it and there are ways to get help.

It's really important to know that all alcohol is dangerous to a developing baby. Red wine is no safer than white wine or beer or hard liquor.

There's no safe time during pregnancy to drink. A lot of women think that certain times such as the last trimester might be safer, but the brain is developing throughout pregnancy and so that damage can occur at any time.

A lot of women also think that they can stop drinking only once they confirm that they're pregnant, but as we know, that will be several weeks into the pregnancy and so damage could occur in those very early weeks.

So it's really important to stress—for everyone—no safe amount, no safe time and no safe type of alcohol.